

**REMARKS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the preceding amendments and following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-22 and 24-42 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-5, 7-10, 12-22, 24-38, 40 and 41 are amended; claim 23 has been cancelled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in those claims or any intervening claims; and claim 42 is added. No new matter is added. Claims 1, 20 and 31 are the independent claims.

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's acknowledgement that certified copies of all priority documents have been received by the U.S.P.T.O.

Applicants also appreciate the Examiner's indication that the Information Disclosure Statements filed on September 20, 2006 and July 30, 2009, have been considered.

Applicants also respectfully note that the present action does **not** indicate that the drawings have been accepted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's next communication include an indication as to the acceptability of the filed drawings or as to any perceived deficiencies so that the Applicants may have a full and fair opportunity to submit appropriate amendments and/or corrections to the drawings.

**Withdrawal of Restriction Requirement**

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement mailed September 30, 2009. It is noted that claims 1-41 were pending and have now been examined by the Examiner.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

Claims 2, 3, 12-17, 29, 30 and 35-41 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office Action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter found in claims 2, 3, 12-17, 29, 30 and 35-41. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 3. Therefore, claim 1, and claims 2 and 4-19 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance.

With regard to claims 20-28 and 31-34, these claims are allowable in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112**

Claims 1-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons discussed below.

Applicants have amended and/or canceled claims 1-41, taking into consideration the Examiner's comments, to obviate the rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102**

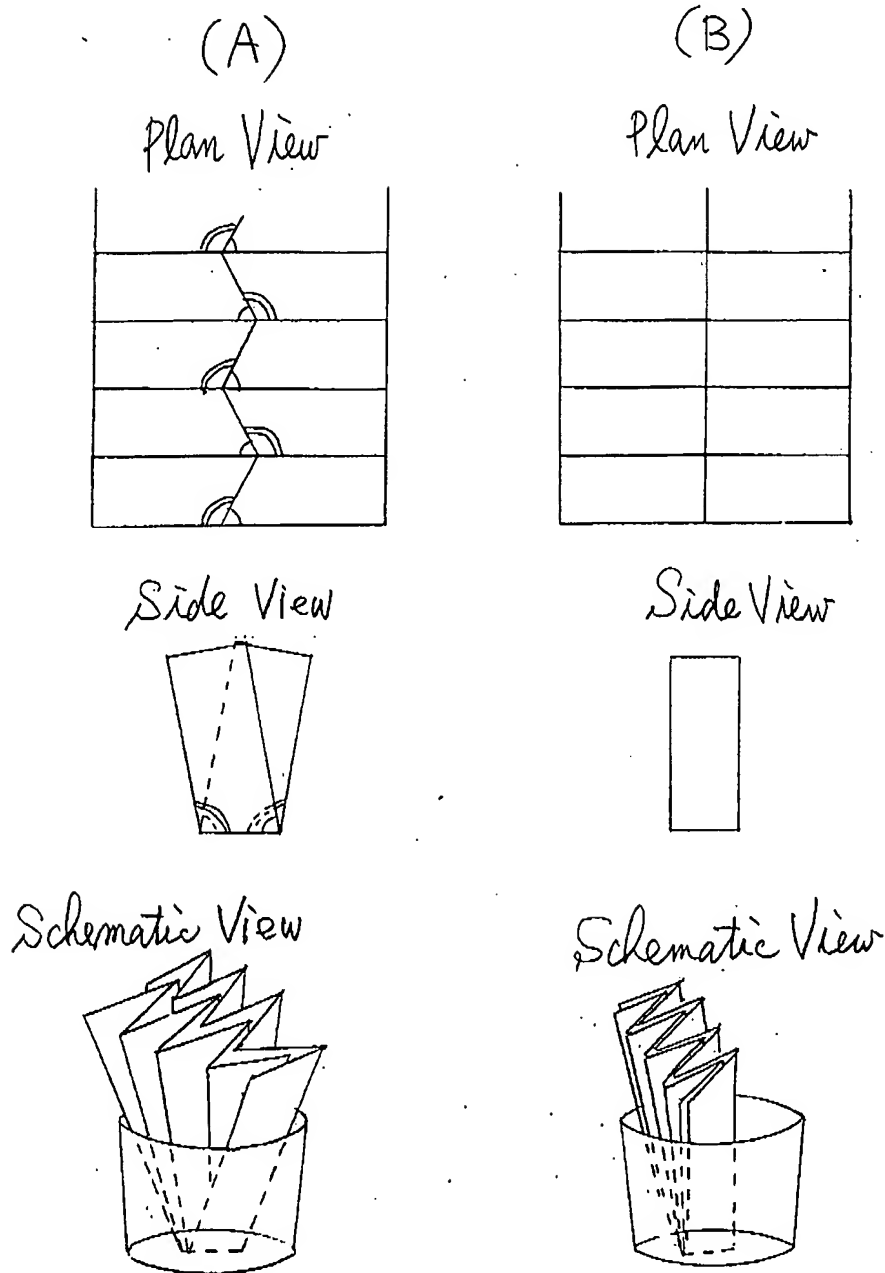
Claims 1, 2, 7-9, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 28, 31 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,717,148 to Hall (hereinafter "**the Hall reference**"); claims 20-28 and 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as

being anticipated by JP 54-36357 (hereinafter "**JP '357**"); and claims 20, 21, 23, 25, 28 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,399,299 to Stengel et al. (hereinafter "**the Stengel reference**"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Initially, since claims 1 and 3-19 are allowed as claim 1 includes the allowable subject matter of claim 3, Applicants remarks below will be directed to claims 20-41.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the applied references disclose, or even suggest, "a humidifying element comprising a plurality of humidifying segments by folding a sheet-shaped absorptive member along a center fold portion that is formed as a zig-zag shape," as recited in independent claim 20.

In other words, the humidifying segments are folded along a center into two segments, in which the center is formed as a "zig-zag" shaped. In this respect, different views are shown below in **portion (A)** reflecting claim 20, and **portion (B)** depicts a conventional humidifying element having a center fold portion of a straight line, as similarly taught in the Hall, the JP '357, and the Stengel references.



Accordingly, as shown above, portion (A) (representing claim 20) illustrates neighboring sectional fold portions not contacting each other. That is, the neighboring sectional fold portions are in a displacement condition, as shown in the above side view. Therefore, one element and the next (neighboring) element do not overlap each other having the same shape. By such configuration, the segments as shown in

portion (A) may provide an area (see side view) being wider than that of portion (B), so that higher humidifying efficiency may be obtained.

Moreover, as shown in the schematic views of above, the humidifying element of claim 20 may be placed (or dipped) in a small container or small cup in which water is filled. The center fold portion of the humidifying element may then be placed on the inside bottom of the container or cup. Consequently, all of the humidifying elements are wetted evenly and equally, even though the water is decreasing due to the absorption.

In contrast, the Hall reference (*see FIG. 2; col. 2, lines 42-52*); the JP '357 reference (*see FIGS. 1-3*); and the Steiner reference (*see FIGS. 1-7; col. 3, lines 1-6*), each discloses a humidifying element having a center fold portion of a straight line. Therefore, Applicants submit that none of the applied references of Hall, JP '357, and Steiner, teach or suggest, *inter alia*, "a plurality of humidifying segments by folding a sheet-shaped absorptive member along a center fold portion that is formed as a zig-zag shape," as recited in claim 20.

Since the the Hall, the JP '357, and the Stengel references fail to disclose each and every element of claim 20, they cannot provide a basis for a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and, thus, are allowable. Claims 21, 23, 25, 28, and 34, depend from amended claim 20 and, therefore, allowable for similar reasons to those discussed above with respect to claim 20.

In regard to independent claim 31, Applicants submit that none of the applied references disclose or suggest "a humidifying element comprising a plurality of absorptive humidifying segments which one end is connected by a connecting portion." In particular, none of the applied references disclose or suggest that one end of the humidifying segment is connected by a connecting portion.

For at least these reasons, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the §102(b) rejection of claims 20, 21, 23, 25, 28, 31 and 34.

**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103**

Claims 5, 6, 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hall in view of JP '357. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Since claims 5, 6, 10 and 11 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on allowed claim 1, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 5, 6, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the pending objections and rejections has been addressed and overcome, placing the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Further, the above remarks demonstrate the failings of the outstanding rejections, and are sufficient to overcome the rejections. However, these remarks are not intended to, nor need they, comprehensively address each and every reason for the patentability of the claimed subject matter over the applied prior art. Accordingly, Applicants do not contend that the claims are patentable solely on the basis of the particular claim elements discussed above.

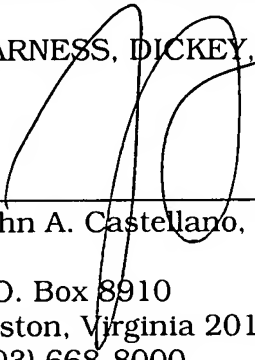
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned, at the telephone number below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By

  
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